

PM's speech at the inauguration of Swachh Bharat Diwas- 2019 – 02 October, 2019



Governor of Gujarat Acharya Devvrat ji, Chief Minister Vijay Rupani ji, other colleagues of the central and the state governments, representatives of the governments of Nigeria, Indonesia and Mali, Heads of Mission of the different countries of the world, thousands of Swachhagrahis from across the country, my Sarpanch friends and brothers and sisters!

Before I begin, through all the Sarpanchs present here on the bank of Sabarmati today, I want to salute all the governing members of the Municipalities and Municipal Corporations of the country; because all of you have made relentless efforts during the past five years with dedication and hard work to fulfil the dream of Bapu.

From this sacred bank of Sabarmati, I pay my homage to the Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi and to the former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastriji, a symbol of simplicity.

Friends,

The holy occasion of the 150th birth anniversary of Pujya Bapu, together with Swachh Bharat Abhiyan's major event and the festival of Shakti i.e. Navratri with an echo of Garba everywhere; Such an amazing and unique coincidence is rarely seen. And our Sarpanch brothers and sisters who have come from all over the country, did you get an opportunity to see the Garba? Did you go to see Garba?

The whole world is celebrating Bapu's birth anniversary. A few days ago the United Nations made this special occasion memorable by issuing postage stamps. And even today postage stamps and coins have been released here. I congratulate the whole world from Bapu's place of inspiration and resolution.

Brothers and sisters,

I had gone to the Sabarmati Ashram before coming here. I have had the opportunity to visit there many times in my lifetime. Every time I felt the presence of Bapu there, but today I also felt a new energy there. It was at the Sabarmati Ashram that he gave a comprehensive form to the Swachhgraha and Satyagraha. On the banks of this Sabarmati, Mahatma Gandhiji had conducted his experiments with truth.

Brothers and sisters,

Today this inspiring site of Sabarmati is witnessing a huge success of Swachhgraha. It is an occasion of happiness and pride for all of us. And for me to organize this event on Sabarmati River Front is a matter of immense joy.

Friends,

Today rural India has declared itself Open Defecation Free. This is not only the power but also the source of success of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, as it saw the public participation voluntarily, in a self-motivated manner. I heartily congratulate every countryman, especially those living in villages, our Sarpanchs, and all the Swachhagrahis today. Today, I also congratulate the Swachhagrahis who have received Swachh Bharat Awards here.

Friends,

Today I really felt like history is repeating itself. Just as lakhs of Indians came out to follow the path of Satyagraha on a call of Bapu for the independence of the country, in the same way crores of countrymen gave their wholehearted support to cleanliness. Five years ago, when I had appealed to the countrymen for clean India from the ramparts of Red Fort, then we had only and only public trust and Bapu's immortal message. Bapu used to say that the changes we want to see in the world, first have to be brought in ourselves.

Following this mantra, we all picked up the broom and set out. Irrespective of the age, social and economic status, everyone has contributed in this 'Yajna' of cleanliness, dignity and respect.

If a daughter places a condition of a toilet being in place before marriage, then the toilet would somewhere get the status of 'Izzatghar'. The toilet, which was once a hush-hush topic to talk about, has become an important part of the thinking of the country. This huge campaign of cleanliness has connected, inspired and encouraged everyone from Bollywood to the playground.

Friends,

The world is amazed by our success today. Today the whole world is rewarding us for this and is paying us respect. It is astonishing to hear that the facility of toilet has been provided to more than 60 crore population in 60 months, and that more than 11 crore toilets have been constructed. But I have a greater satisfaction than any statistics, any praise, or any honour when I see girls going to school without any worries.

I am satisfied that crores of mothers and sisters are now free from an unbearable pain of waiting for darkness. I am satisfied that the lives of lakhs of innocent people who were dying as a result of severe diseases, are now saved. I am satisfied that due to cleanliness, the expenditure on the treatment of diseases that would have otherwise struck the poor has reduced now. I am satisfied that this campaign has given new employment opportunities to people in rural areas and tribal areas. Earlier the head masons used to be only males; but now sisters were also given the opportunity to work as head masons.

Brothers and sisters,

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan is also proving to be life-saving and is also working to raise the standard of living. According to an estimate by UNICEF, there has been a positive impact of Rs. 20 lakh crore from Swachh Bharat on the Indian economy in the last five years. This has created more than 75 lakh employment opportunities in India, most of which have been received by the sisters and brothers of the villages.

Moreover, it has had a positive impact on the level of education of children, on our productivity and on entrepreneurship. This has brought about a phenomenal change in the situation of protection and empowerment of daughters and sisters in the country. Pujya Mahatma Gandhi wanted such a model to encourage self-reliance and empowerment of the village, the poor and women. This was at the core of Mahatma Gandhi's Swaraj. He had dedicated his life for the same.

Friends,

But now the question is – whatever we have achieved is that enough? The answer is simple and clear. What we have achieved today is just one stage, only one level. Our journey towards clean India continues unabated.

Now we have built toilets and encouraging people to form the habit of using toilets. Now we have to make this change in the habit of a large section of the country a permanent affair. Be it the governments, local administrations, or Gram Panchayats, we have to ensure that the toilet is properly used. Those who are still out of it will have to be brought under this.

Brothers and sisters,

The Jal Jeevan Mission that the government has just started, will also help in this matter. We should do whatever we can for water recycling in our homes, villages, and colonies for water recharge. If we can do this, it will help a lot in ensuring a regular and permanent use of the toilet by the people. The government has decided to spend three and a half lakh crore rupees on the Jal-Jeevan Mission. But it is difficult to accomplish this monumental task without the active participation of the countrymen.

Friends,

Sanitation, environmental protection and the protection of living beings – these three things were favorite subjects of Mahatma Gandhi. Plastic is a major danger for these three. Therefore, we have to achieve the goal of freeing the country from single-use plastic by the year 2022. In the last three weeks, the whole country has given a lot of momentum to this campaign through cleanliness drive. I have been told that about 20 thousand tons of plastic waste has been collected during this period. In the same period, it is also seen that the use of plastic carry bag is decreasing very fast.

I am also aware that today, crores of people across the country have resolved not to use single-use plastic i.e. the plastic that we use once and then throw away and we have to free the country from such plastic. It will benefit the environment, solve big problems that block the roads and sewage of our cities and will also protect our livestock and marine life.

Brothers and sisters,

I would like to reiterate that the most important thing at the core of our movement is behavioral change. This change first starts from self, through self-realization. We learn this lesson from the life of Mahatma Gandhiji and Lal Bahadur Shastriji.

When the country was facing a severe food crisis, Shastriji called upon the countrymen to change their eating habits, but started the change

with his own family. This is also the only way for us in this journey of cleanliness, walking upon which we have to reach the destination.

Brothers and sisters,

Today the whole world wants to learn from this model of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and adopt it. A few days ago, when India was awarded the Global Goal Keeper Award in America, the success of India became known to the whole world.

I had also said in the United Nations that India is always ready to share its experiences with other countries. Today we have representatives from Nigeria, Indonesia, and the Mali governments. India will be happy to collaborate with you for cleanliness and sanitation.

Friends,

Mahatma Gandhi had shown the country the path of truth, non-violence, Satyagraha and self-reliance. Today we are following the same path and are engaged in building a clean, healthy, prosperous and strong New India. Pujya Bapu considered sanitation to be paramount. Like a true disciple, the rural area of the country is paying him obeisance through the work of clean India today. Gandhiji considered health as true wealth and wanted every citizen of the country to be healthy. We are trying to bring this idea into the practice in this country through Yoga Day, Ayushman Bharat and Fit India Movement.

Gandhiji believed in 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'. Now India is helping the world fight against many challenges through its new plans and commitment to the environment. Bapu's dream was of an independent and a self-confident India. Today we are engaged in making these dreams fulfil with Make in India, Startup India, and Stand up India schemes.

Gandhiji's resolve was an India where every village is self-reliant. We are taking this resolution towards fulfillment through Rashtriya Gram Swaraj.

Gandhiji used to talk about making every decision for the last person at the bottom-most stratum of the society. We have schemes like Ujjwala, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Jan Dhan Yojana, Saubhagya Yojana and Swachh Bharat Abhiyan today. Through all these schemes, we have made his mantra a part of the system.

Pujya Bapu had talked of making the lives of people easier by using technology. We are trying to make the lives of the countrymen easier through Aadhaar, Direct Benefit Transfer, Digital India, Bhim app and Digi Locker.

Friends, Mahatma Gandhi used to say that he wanted India to develop so that the whole world could take advantage of it. Gandhiji was clearly

of the opinion that one could not be a world figure without being a nationalist. That is, we have to find solutions to our problems first, only then we can help the whole world. Today, India is moving forward with this spirit of nationalism.

Bapu's dream India; a New India is being created. Bapu's dream India – which will be clean and the environment will be protected.

Bapu's dream India; where every person will be healthy and fit. Bapu's dream India; where every mother and every child will be nurtured.

Bapu's dream India; – where every citizen will feel safe. Bapu's dream India; which will be free from discrimination, and will be full of harmony.

The India of Bapu's dreams – which will follow the ideal of 'Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas'. All these elements of Bapu's nationalism will be ideal for the whole world and will become a source of inspiration.

Let us, every Indian, for the sake of humanity, make one resolution to re-establish the values of the Father of the Nation and to fulfil every resolution for the nation.

Today, I urge the country for 'one person, one resolution'. Make any resolution for the country, which should be useful for the country. It should be a resolve for the welfare of the country and society. I urge you to take at least one resolution and think about your duties and your obligations towards the nation.

Walking on the path of duty, the strength of 130 crore efforts and 130 crore resolutions can do so much for the country. Starting from today, we have to work ceaselessly in this direction for the next one year. Having worked for a year, if this becomes the direction of our life, and our way of life, then this will be a true tribute to Bapu of a grateful nation.

With this request and these words, I want to say one more thing – the success that has been achieved is not the success of any government.

The success that has been achieved is not the success of any Prime Minister. The success that has been achieved is not the success of any Chief Minister.

This success has been achieved due to the efforts of 130 crore citizens. It was possible as the senior people of the society have provided leadership and guidance from time to time. And I have seen, five years in a row, all the media houses have taken this forward continuously and have helped positively. The media has played an important role in creating this atmosphere in the country.

Today I salute all those who have worked for this, the 130 crore countrymen. I thank them and I am grateful to them.

With these words, I conclude. You will all say along with me-

I will say- 'Mahatma Gandhi', you all will say loudly with both your hands up – Amar Rahe! Amar Rahe!

Mahatma Gandhi – Amar Rahe!

Mahatma Gandhi – Amar Rahe!

Mahatma Gandhi – Amar Rahe!

Once again, I congratulate the nation for accomplishing a very big resolution.

Say along with me-

Bharat Mata ki Jai!

Bharat Mata ki Jai!

Bharat Mata ki Jai!

Thanks a lot!